

News Release

March 22, 2005 – Sustainability Seminar “Evaluation of Sustainable Development”

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Evaluation Of Sustainable Development

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Okey Ukaga, Executive Director of the Northeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, University of Minnesota, is the guest speaker at the next Sustainability Seminar at UMC.

According to Ukaga and Maser (2004) 1, sustainable development requires an appropriate system of evaluation that enables citizens to understand the situation in which they are operating, figure out whether they need to change the situation, figure out important questions to ask, and find the answers. Dr. Ukaga will discuss how participatory approach can be utilized to promote sustainable development by enabling key stakeholders to work together in determining what is to be evaluated, the evaluation criteria, the methods and instruments for generating data needed, how to analyze collected data, and how to interpret and communicate findings. He will illustrate this approach by discussing how the case of the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, which involved:

Articulating the groups principles of sustainable development;

Creating a vision, goals and objectives to determine what they want and why;

Determining what to evaluate and choosing indicators to measure or monitor that;

Using appropriate sources, timing, instruments and methods to collect data;

Analyze data to determine if the project has actually achieved its objectives; and  
Using/communicating findings to construct and reconstruct realities.

Before coming to Minnesota, Dr. Ukaga served as Managing Director of the International Institute for Sustainable Development at Colorado State University for five years. In that capacity, he managed a variety of sustainable community development projects and worked with organizations and people from countries in Africa, South America, Asia and the Middle East on such projects. He was born in Nigeria and received a Ph.D. in agricultural and extension education, from Penn State University, an M.S. in education and an M.B.A. from Florida A&M University, and a Post Graduate Diploma in agricultural economics from the University of Nigeria. He has previously taught at Colorado State University, Penn State University and Florida A & M University. He is currently a member of the Minnesota Sea Grant College Board, and the Executive Board of Minnesota Evaluation Association. He is also a member of a Kettering Foundation funded national (USA) task force on the practice of public scholarship in land-grant institutions, and a member of a European Union funded international task force on evaluation of sustainable development. His current professional and research interests are in agricultural development in Africa, community food systems, participatory planning and evaluation of sustainable development, and United Nations Security Council reform. Dr. Ukaga has written and/or coauthored over 40 publications including journal articles, conference papers, and project reports. His book *Renewing the Countryside* (2001, co-edited with Jan Joannides, Sara Bergan, Mark Ritchie, and Beth Waterhouse) highlights the success stories of people across Minnesota's diverse and beautiful landscapes who are conserving and enhancing the state's natural and cultural resources while spurring local economic and community development. His book *Evaluation of Sustainable Development* (2004, co-authored with Chris Maser) presents the principles and tools for participatory evaluation of sustainable development. His latest book *Sustainable Development in Africa* (2004, co-edited with Osita Afoaku) examines factors limiting sustainable development in Africa and offers reasoned suggestions on practical strategies for achieving development in Africa that is anchored on the values of sustainability, appropriateness and equity.

1Ukaga, Okechukwu and Maser, Chris (2004) *Evaluating Sustainable Development: Giving People a Voice in Their Destiny*, Stylus Publishing, Sterling, VA.

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